

Destruction of Passenger Pigeons in Arkansas.— My friend, Mr. C. A. Willett of Hammond, La., sends me an interesting account of the destruction of Passenger Pigeons by a forest fire. Some years ago he was accustomed to board with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Booth of Garner, Arkansas. Mr. Booth was a great hunter and knew the country well. "Many a time," writes Mr. Willett, "he told me of the Wild Pigeons and how they filled the woods and he always insisted very positively that they all burned up. Mr. Booth died a few years ago but Mrs. Booth is still living. His story was as follows:

"Near Hickory Plains, Arkansas, some eight miles east of Beebe, White County, Ark., there was in the early days, a large pigeon roost. The timber, where the roost was, was all broken down from the weight of the birds that used it; the ground covered with litter, limbs, dry grass, dead trees, brush, etc. You can imagine what a hot fire such a place must have made. The weight of the birds was such that large trees had the branches stripped off them, and only the trunk was left standing, others were all split in pieces. All the big timber in this roost had been broken down. When hunters wanted pigeons in that section, they were in the habit of going to the roost at night and with guns, clubs, and poles, knocked down all they wanted.

"On this fatal night a party of hunters accidentally set fire to the woods, burning out the roost with all the pigeons. There was so much litter upon the ground that the fire burned an entire week. Pigeons would begin to come to the roost along about two o'clock in the afternoon, and keep it up until dark. They poured into that fire by the hundreds, keeping it up all week while that roost was burning. The ground was alive with naked pigeons that had the feathers singed off them, but which eventually died and ever since that fire there have been no more wild pigeons in Arkansas, so Mr. Booth positively insisted, and he was a hunter who was in the woods all the time, and when he was eighty years old, still had perfect eyesight and could read a paper without glasses.

"Now, I asked Mrs. Booth the last time I saw her, when this fire occurred. She said that they moved onto their farm in 1877, and as it now seems to her, they must have lived on it, before the roost burned, something like a year or two. This, as she figured it, would put the fire around the year 1879, but she is not positive as to this date.

"I think these facts should be investigated—the time this roost burned, for burn it did, the extent of the roost, and the date of the fire, all of which can no doubt be ascertained pretty accurately if some of the old settlers are still alive and no doubt some are."

This account seems worthy of publication and investigation by those who are in a position to secure more details of the catastrophe.— PAUL BARTSCH, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

American Goshawks in Kansas.— Eastern Kansas is being honored this fall by a visit from a flight of these beautiful hawks. The only other

occurrence in the State according to the records in the museum of the University of Kansas was a single specimen taken in Riley Co., February, 1878, by W. F. Allen. From October 27 of this year to the present date, November 20, the Museum has obtained nine specimens, three females and six males. I have reports of several that were killed and thrown away, and several live specimens were seen by a party from the museum.

The farmers report that they are killing their full grown chickens, but the contents of the stomachs of those received at the museum contained only rabbit.—C. D. BUNKER, *Museum of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.*

Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) in Jefferson Co..

N. Y.—While hunting Grouse and Woodcock near the village of Adams Center, Jefferson Co., N. Y., on October 20, 1916, I collected a female Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker. I was at once attracted by the call-note which was one I had not heard before. This bird is my first record of the species during the four or five years I have been observing the birds of Adams and the neighboring towns.—EDMUND J. SAWYER, *Watertown, N. Y.*

The Earliest Name for the Nighthawk.—*Caprimulgus virginianus* Gmelin (Syst. Nat., I, ii, 1789, 1028) is the long-established basis for our Nighthawk, the sources quoted by this author being Linnæus, Kalm, Brisson, Catesby, Edwards, Buffon, Pennant and Latham. The accounts of nearly all these writers, except Kalm (who made independent observations in New Jersey) are easily traced back to Catesby or Edwards. Catesby (Nat. Hist. Carolina, II, 1743, Appendix, 16, pl. 16) described and figured a bird from Virginia, which is unquestionably the Nighthawk, but the habits ascribed to it are those of the Whip-poor-will. Edwards (Nat. Hist. Birds, II, 1747, 63, pl. 63) gave a much better description and figure of probably the same individual, with which "Mr. Mark Catesby obliged" him. Both Catesby and Edwards introduced rictal bristles in their figures, probably because the only species then known possessed them, and the characters of the genus *Caprimulgus* required them as one of the features to distinguish it from *Hirundo*. Edwards, however, made no mention of rictal bristles in the minute description furnished by him.

So much for the basis of Gmelin's *Caprimulgus virginianus*, supposedly the earliest name for the Nighthawk. Some years before Gmelin, however, J. R. Forster published his 'Catalogue of the Animals of North America.' This was issued in 1771, and is of little importance at this date, but it contains two or three new names for birds, one of them being *Capr[imulgus] minor*, p. 13, based on "C. III. 16.," meaning Catesby (as Forster explains on p. 5), Appendix, p. 16. As this Catesby reference is the chief basis of Gmelin's name, it follows that *Caprimulgus minor* Forster is of equal pertinency, and our Nighthawk should be known as *Chordeiles minor minor*, while the subspecies from the Greater Antilles, now called